

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 03910 210851Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 DHA-02 NSCE-00 SSO-00  
USIE-00 INRE-00 /066 W  
-----210853Z 021093 /17

O 210758Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1983  
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY  
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA IMMEDIATE  
AMCONSUL MADRAS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 3910

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR IN  
SUBJECT: INDIAN ELECTIONS: A VICTORY FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1. WHATEVER MAY BE SAID ABOUT THE INDIAN ELECTION -- AND THE  
EMBASSY WILL BE TRANSMITTING VARIOUS ANALYSES TODAY -- I BELIEVE  
THERE IS ONE INESCAPABLE CONCLUSION. THE ELECTION PROCESS AND  
RESULT REPRESENT A VICTORY FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS. INDIA  
HAS ONCE AGAIN BECOME THE WORLD'S LARGEST DEMOCRACY.

2. THERE IS STILL A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE WE CAN SAY THAT INDIAN  
DEMOCRACY HAS SUCCESSFULLY SURMOUNTED THE SETBACK OF THE EMERGENCY.  
THE OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE OF UNCERTAIN LEADERSHIP AND UNITY;  
THERE WILL BE MUCH POLITICAL MANEUVERING AND CONSIDERABLE  
DANGER OF INSTABILITY DURING THE WEEKS AHEAD. AND, WHILE THERE  
ARE FRIENDS OF THE UNITED STATES AMONG THE OPPOSITION LEADERSHIP,  
THERE ARE ALSO UNCERTAINTIES REGARDING THE FUTURE OF INDO-US  
RELATIONS.

3. THUS FAR, HOWEVER, INDIAN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS HAS SHOWN  
REMARKABLE VIGOR. WE MUST CREDIT MRS. GANDHI WITH THE DECISION  
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TO SEEK LEGITIMACY AND THEREFORE HOLD ELECTIONS.  
THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE GOI -- CIVIL SERVICE, POLICE,  
MILITARY -- LARGELY MAINTAINED ITS INDEPENDENCE AND ASSURED  
THAT THE ELECTIONS WOULD BE FREE AND FAIR, AS WE CONCLUDE FOR THE  
MOST PART THEY HAVE BEEN. PERHAPS MOST STRIKING HAS BEEN THE  
COURAGE AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL ILLITERATE VOTERS WHO, WHEN

THE SHOE HURT, FLOCKED TO THE POLLS TO SEEK A REMEDY.

4. DEMOCRACY HAS BEEN FURTHER STRNGTHENED BY THE EXAMPLE OF THE FAILURE OF AUTHORITARIAN RULE. BY TAKING EXTRAORDINARY POWERS, MRS. GANDHI WAS ABLE MORE EASILY TO CARRY OUT GOVERNMENTAL ACTIONS BY USING COERCIVE POWERS. TO DO SO, HOWEVER, SHE SUSPENDED THE OPERATION OF A POLITICAL SYSTEM UNDER WHICH GRIEVANCES WERE COMMUNICATED UPWARD THROUGH LOCAL, REGIONAL AND FINALLY NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS AND, AS A RESULT, REMEDIAL ACTION WAS TAKEN. AS A RESULT, MRS. GANDHI WAS ABLE TO CARRY OUT FORCEFUL GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMS, SUCH AS FAMILY PLANNING, BUT SHE WAS APPARENTLY UNAWARE UNTIL TOO LATE OF THE DEEPLY FELT SENSE OF GRIEVANCE WHICH RESULTED.

5. INDIANS WHO HAVE SUPPOTED THE OPPOSITION -- AND WE SUSPECT MANY WHO VOTED CONGRESS -- ARE UNDERSTANDABLY PROUD OF THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INDIAN PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM. THEY WILL EXPECT AND WELCOME EXPRESSIONS FROM OTHER DEMOCRACIES WHICH SHARE THAT PRIDE. I BELIEVE IT IS TOO EARLY FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO OFFER IST CONGRATULATIONS ON THE ELECTION RESULT, THAT SHOULD BE DONE WHEN A PRIME MINISTER HAS BEEN SELECTED AND A GOVERNMENT FORMED WITHIN SEVERAL DAYS. FURTHERMORE, WE SHOULD AVOID COMMENT WHICH SUGGESTS IN ANY WAY THAT WE MAY HAVE SUPPORTED THE OPPOSITION IN THE ELECTION. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND, HOWEVER, THAT WASHINGTON FIND WAYS TO WELCOME THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WHICH HAS PERFORMED SO WELL FOR INDIA DURING THE PAST TEN WEEKS.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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